

Children Receiving Preschool Special Education Services

DEFINITION

Children receiving preschool special education services is the percentage of children ages three to five who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and are receiving special education services in Rhode Island.

SIGNIFICANCE

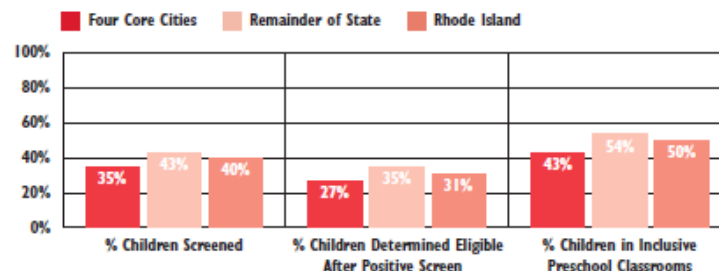
Preschool special education is an important component of the early care and education system, providing specially-designed instruction so each child can meet learning standards. The federal *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* specifies that children ages three to five with developmental delays and disabilities have the same right to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment as school-age children with disabilities.¹

Developmental delays and disabilities are identified when a child does not reach developmental milestones at the same time as other children his or her age. Some young children with developmental delays are eventually diagnosed with a disability while others catch up to their peers when provided with high-quality educational opportunities, therapies, or interventions.^{2,3} Routine developmental screening during the early stages of life, followed by evaluation and diagnostic assessment, helps children gain early access to needed services in order to prevent the occurrence of more severe problems.⁴

In Rhode Island, school districts work to screen every child age three through five every year through the Child Outreach screening program.⁵ During the 2017-2018 school year in Rhode Island, districts completed developmental screenings for 40% of children ages three to five. Preschool-age children in the core cities are still less likely to receive a developmental screening (34%) than children in the remainder of the state (43%). Of those children who were referred based on positive screens, 32% were determined eligible for preschool special education. Children in the core cities were less likely to be determined eligible after referral (26%) than children in the remainder of the state (37%).⁶

Approximately 15% of U.S. children ages three to 17 have a developmental disability, with boys and children in low-income families more likely to have a disability than girls and children in higher-income families.⁷ Under *IDEA*, each state sets its own criteria to determine eligibility for special education services, deciding where to draw the line along a continuum of functioning to identify children who are sufficiently delayed to need special education services.⁸ In 2016, Rhode Island ranked in the top ten states for providing preschool special education services by serving 9.1% of children ages three to five compared with a U.S. average of 6.4%.⁹

Preschool Special Education Screening, Eligibility, and Inclusion Rates, Rhode Island, June 2018



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, 2017-2018 Child Outreach Screening and Referral Rates and June 2018 Special Education Census. % children determined eligible is of those children referred from Child Outreach screening.

◆ In June 2018, there were 3,121 children ages three to five receiving preschool special education services, 8% of all preschool-age children in Rhode Island. Children in the four core cities are slightly less likely to receive preschool special education services (8%) than children in the remainder of the state (9%).¹⁰

◆ Preschool children with disabilities who attend high-quality preschool with typically developing children and receive special education services in inclusive settings have improved outcomes.¹¹ In June 2018 in Rhode Island, 49% of preschool-age children received special education services within an inclusive early childhood classroom. Children in the four core cities were less likely to receive preschool special education services in an inclusive early childhood setting (42%) than children in the remainder of the state (53%).¹²

◆ About half of the children receiving preschool special education services in Rhode Island receive services outside of inclusive preschool programs, with 13% enrolled in a separate special education preschool class or school, 22% receiving services through “walk-in” visits to a service provider, 16% enrolled in a preschool setting but receiving special education services in another location, and less than 1% in a home or hospital.¹³

◆ In June 2018, 44% (1,374) of the 3,121 children receiving preschool special education services in Rhode Island qualified under the developmental delay category, 46% (1,432) had an identified speech/language disability, 7% (210) were diagnosed with autism, and 3% (105) had another diagnosed disability.¹⁴

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Table 41. Children Ages 3 to 5 Receiving Special Education Services, Rhode Island, 2018

SCHOOL DISTRICT	# OF CHILDREN AGES 3-5	DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING RATES				PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION BY SETTING				
		% SCREENED 3 YEARS BEFORE K	% SCREENED 2 YEARS BEFORE K	% SCREENED 1 YEAR BEFORE K	% SCREENED AGES 3 TO 5	INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASS	% IN INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASS	OTHER SETTING	TOTAL # RECEIVING SERVICES	% RECEIVING SERVICES
Barrington	586	32%	71%	88%	66%	22	40%	33	55	9%
Bristol Warren	805	16%	47%	47%	37%	24	38%	40	64	8%
Burrillville	455	18%	46%	64%	42%	23	42%	32	55	12%
Central Falls	1,070	33%	58%	71%	54%	61	51%	59	120	11%
Charlton	641	23%	61%	55%	48%	32	51%	31	63	10%
Coventry	1,023	23%	52%	64%	46%	67	67%	33	100	10%
Cranston	2,697	13%	47%	57%	39%	86	44%	109	195	7%
Cumberland	1,236	10%	48%	59%	39%	45	54%	39	84	7%
East Greenwich	466	13%	58%	61%	42%	38	90%	*	42	9%
East Providence	1,494	10%	43%	61%	39%	34	28%	87	121	8%
Exeter-West Greenwich	363	34%	66%	73%	57%	14	47%	16	30	8%
Foster	111	25%	57%	65%	48%	*	50%	*	*	5%
Glocester	284	25%	57%	65%	48%	10	31%	22	32	11%
Jamestown	119	30%	75%	85%	66%	*	67%	*	12	10%
Johnston	850	16%	51%	78%	48%	55	67%	27	82	10%
Lincoln	708	13%	53%	61%	42%	56	72%	22	78	11%
Little Compton	58	19%	20%	71%	37%	*	67%	*	*	10%
Middletown	875	9%	27%	33%	24%	34	69%	15	49	6%
Narragansett	221	46%	85%	87%	71%	21	75%	*	28	13%
New Shoreham	30	100%	67%	100%	89%	0	0%	*	*	3%
Newport	1,104	18%	43%	49%	37%	40	73%	15	55	5%
North Kingstown	818	33%	67%	76%	59%	54	74%	19	73	9%
North Providence	1,037	20%	40%	62%	40%	39	46%	46	85	8%
North Smithfield	351	18%	55%	71%	49%	18	42%	25	43	12%
Pawtucket	2,989	10%	34%	56%	32%	127	49%	131	258	9%
Portsmouth	503	23%	60%	84%	57%	15	43%	20	35	7%
Providence	8,121	14%	41%	42%	32%	259	51%	251	510	6%
Scituate	286	25%	57%	65%	48%	*	27%	16	22	8%
Smithfield	458	39%	71%	76%	62%	25	49%	26	51	11%
South Kingstown	682	28%	76%	78%	62%	23	40%	35	58	9%
Tiverton	447	10%	32%	61%	36%	21	50%	21	42	9%
Warwick	2,670	9%	37%	55%	34%	110	53%	98	208	8%
West Warwick	1,086	17%	41%	61%	40%	68	52%	62	130	12%
Westerly	650	37%	71%	88%	64%	57	79%	15	72	11%
Woonsocket	1,958	9%	36%	61%	34%	26	11%	207	233	12%
Charter Schools	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	13	87%	*	15	NA
RI School for the Deaf	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0	0%	*	*	NA
Four Core Cities	14,138	14%	40%	49%	34%	473	42%	648	1,121	8%
Remainder of State	23,114	18%	50%	63%	43%	1,052	53%	925	1,977	9%
Rhode Island	37,252	16%	46%	58%	40%	1,538	49%	1,583	3,121	8%

Sources of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), June 2018 Special Education Census.

2017-2018 Child Outreach screening data is from the RIIDE Office of Student, Community, and Academic Supports. Foster, Glocester, and Scituate school districts collaborate to conduct Child Outreach screenings. Separate rates are not available for each of these districts so the same combined rate is used for all three districts.

*Fewer than 10 students are in this category. Actual numbers are not shown to protect student confidentiality. These students are still counted in district totals and in the four core cities, remainder of the state, and state totals.

The denominator is the number of children ages three to five residing in each district during the 2017-2018 school year from the Rhode Island Department of Health's KIDSNET database shared with RIIDE.

Due to changes in the denominator, screening rates and percentage receiving preschool special education services should not be compared with data in Factbooks published before 2016.

Inclusive early childhood class means children receive the majority of their special education services in a general early childhood education class at a public school, a Head Start program, or a community-based child care program or preschool. Data include children who are district-placed and who are parentally-placed.

NA=Not applicable

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

References

^{1,2,3,4} Hebbeler, K. & Spiker, D. (2016). Supporting young children with disabilities. *The Future of Children*, 26(2), 185-205.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *Developmental screening fact sheet*. Retrieved January 18, 2016, from www.cdc.gov

⁶ Meisels, S. J. & Atkins-Burnett, S. (2005). *Developmental screening in early childhood: A guide*. (5th edition). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

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